

DORDT diamond

Dordt pair shines at ACTF

Inside

Dordt students travel to St. Louis for competition

Ann Andree
Staff Writer

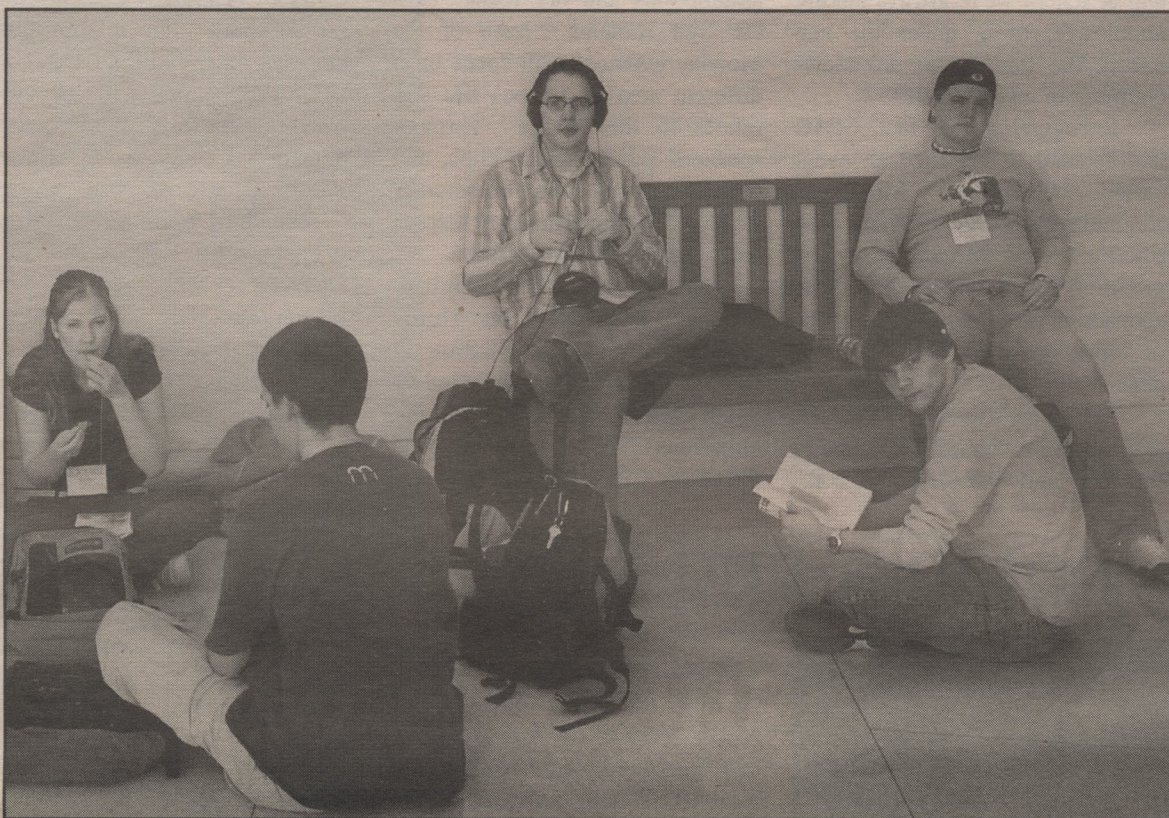
Ethan Koerner and Laura Dykstra placed in the top 16 finalists out of over 300 participants in the Irene Ryan Competition at the American College Theatre Festival (ACTF) in St. Louis during the week of January 18 through 22.

Competing in the Irene Ryan category, each actor has five minutes to perform two short scenes with a partner in addition to a monologue from different plays in six minutes. The top 16 finalists receive a \$500 scholarship.

The scene performed by Ethan and Laura was entitled, "Red Light, Green Light," part of "Faith of the Fallen," written and produced by Jack Maatman and Adam Smith.

"It was a once in a lifetime opportunity where you are standing in front of 1500 people. It's an amazing and almost surreal moment. One heck of a party!" said Laura.

While at ACTF, participants—both students and instructors—had



Beth Knight

Joelle Sparks, Nathan Pasma, Ethan Koerner, Marcus Roskamp and Jonathon Shaffstall (l-r) relax at the American College Theatre Festival held recently in St. Louis, Missouri.

opportunities to attend workshops, participate in the Irene Ryan competition and watch performances by other schools. Jonathan Horlings attended the National Critics Institute, an intensive 3-day critiquing workshop. During the mornings, participants spent three

hours in workshops. The days were spent watching productions, and in

the evening, back at the hotel, critiques of the day's events were written late into the night.

Said Horlings, "I was exposed to different plays, genres of theatre and different perspectives on humanity." The New Age perspective was one example

that Horlings identified. Two years ago, the Greek play

"Iphigenia" was performed by another college, and gave inspiration to perform last year's spring production, "The Greeks: The Murders" at Dordt.

ACTF is a learning opportunity for Dordt. In addition to meeting people from other schools and other backgrounds, theatre arts professor April Hubbard was one of many in attendance able to see what other colleges are doing at other theatres.

**"It was a once in a lifetime opportunity."
- Laura Dykstra -**

DordtTalk open forum debuts on DENIS homepage

Elisanna Bell
Staff Writer

Since its start late last semester, the public forum DordtTalk has become one of Dordt's most popular forms of entertainment. It has allowed Dordt students to read others' opinions and ideas, as well as

voice their own on a variety of top As a discussion board, DordtTalk works by one person posting some writing about a particular subject, to which anyone may read and reply. Posts can be written either under the open discussion forum or under the moderated discussion.

While anyone can respond

with anything in the open discussion, the moderated discussion, which started February 2. In this moderated forum, monitored by Brian Van Donselaar, any personal attacks or irrelevant comments can be deleted.

Considering the number of posts, students seem to be enjoying this forum. Junior Amy Nugteren

said, "It is just interesting to see how much people have to say when they have a forum to say it in."

Regardless of the topic, most of the discussion appears to be in good fun. The topics are varied and even informative. The most important thing is that Dordt students are being heard in an open, safe and free way.

Fast Forward

Joe Eggebeen
News Editor

Housing plans underway Flute and music recital

Student Services has e-mailed out notices to all students that it is time to prepare for housing for next year. All returning students are required to fill out the necessary forms, even if they plan to live off campus for all or part of next year.

The due date for all housing sign up cards, forms and money is March 23. Keep an eye on your email inbox as well as your mailbox on campus for these forms, or print them off the mass emails.

Juniors Ruth Lynch and Carrie Spronk have a free public recital planned for February 11 at 3:00 pm in the BJ Haan.

Lynch, the first-chair flutist in Dordt's Concert Band, has chosen several international pieces to play, including a guitar-accompanied piece from Argentina.

Spronk, an organ performance major, has chosen a range of works from the 17th to the 20th century, including a piece by Chopin.

Bread for the World holds fast

The Bread for the World Club has chosen February 9 as their day of fasting, from 6 pm on the 9th to 6 pm on the 10th. All students are invited to participate, whether they ordinarily eat in the commons or in their own apartments.

sign up sheets for the fast can be found at the Commons, Student Services and the Humble Bean. For more information, look in The Today or direct questions to bwclub@dordt.edu.



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February Mondays come to Dordt College

Andrea Dykshoorn
Editor

Do you ever have the frustrating feeling that your voice is not being heard on campus? While the new DordtTalk discussion board may provide students with an opportunity to vent about various issues, many people still feel that their opinions and concerns are not being addressed.

According to Dr. Syd Hielema, chair of the Spiritual Activities Committee, or SPAC, "The Christian life is full of difficult and confusing issues, and all too often these issues are not discussed pub-

licly. I'll never forget the student who once said in class, 'At church and at school we're always talking about everything under the sun except the things that are really churning in my stomach.'"

Recognizing this fact, SPAC has decided to organize an event called 'February Mondays.' Beginning on February 7 and continuing every Monday for the month of February, SPAC will be sponsoring discussions on a variety of topics pertinent to Dordt students.

"This year's theme is 'Voices,' and the point behind the theme is that real understanding and com-

munication between Christians is easily blocked because of our assumptions and our fears," says Dr. Syd Hielema. "Each of the Monday evenings will focus on a different area of campus life that relates to this theme." Through speakers, panels, video clips, and other means, the Dordt community will have the opportunity to discuss and debate a variety of issues.

The title of the first 'February Monday' is "Who's on Third? Privilege and Discrimination at Dordt". The evening will be led by Sandi Altena, Cella Bosma and numerous students from the Spectrum Club. Because the sec-

ond Monday falls on Valentine's Day, SPAC decided to bring in a variety of couples-young and old-to talk about their relationships with each other and the Lord. This panel discussion will provide something for everyone, whether young or old, single, dating or married.

The third evening, organized by Pastor Cliff Bajema and Sam Gutierrez, will focus on "Mandatory Chapel: Yes or No?" Discussion leaders with differing views will debate the pros and cons of mandatory attendance at chapel, and the discussion will then be opened up to the audience. This

evening will provide the student body with the opportunity to voice their concerns or their support for mandatory chapels.

Dr. Hielema will be leading the final 'February Monday'. This evening, the focus will be on denominations at Dordt. Says Hielema, "I have the face of a student burned on my heart who told me that she was leaving Dordt because her roommate told her she was going to hell if she stayed in her denomination. Is it possible for Dordt to be reformed and open to students from many different backgrounds?" Find out by attending February Mondays at Dordt.

DC women worship and reflect



Linsay Carlson

Resident Assistant Shelia Otness and junior Khara Chilcote share a laugh with onlookers at the DC women's retreat

Rachel Wielenga
Staff Writer

This past Friday night around 5:15, while most Dordt students were still trying to figure out what to do for the night, approximately fifty women, packed with their pillows, blankets, and Bibles, were heading to Carmel, Iowa, for a night of fun, food, and fellowship. The overnight retreat, held at Carmel Reformed Church, was put on by Linsay Carlson and The Women of Promise, an on-campus group dedicated to the spiritual health of women at Dordt.

After registering and playing a few games, the women were treated to a delicious lasagna dinner, followed by a worship period led by a praise band with piano, violin, guitar and drums to prepare the women for the first session of three, each led by Sandi Altena, Res. Life director.

Altena's sessions talked about how to focus on being the woman God created her to be by using the gifts given to her. Her three sessions reflected on the cultural implications that tend to distort how women are perceived.

The first session, "Integrity of the Mind", focused on connecting

who you are and who you want to be with your actions and choices. Altena outlined the importance of resisting conformity and having purity of thought. Her session was followed by group discussion and a small break.

Before starting the next session, the women were treated to massage lessons from massage therapist Ms. Snieder, as well as brownies and hot chocolate, a good transition into the second and final session of the night, "Sanctity of the Body." After hearing about the importance of viewing their bodies and femininity as what God designed them to be, the women has personal time to reflect before a last worship session and bed time.

At 9 on Saturday morning, the women started their day with a reviving Pilates workout followed by brunch and worship time before starting the final session of the retreat. Altena's final talk was on "Purity of the Heart," which complimented the previous night's sessions on body and mind. The women were all presented with beaded necklaces to remind them of the discussions they had and the things that they learned. After a final worship session, the Dordt women returned to campus, strengthened and enlightened.

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Out and About



Jill Hiemstra
Staff Writer

Credit Card Man Holds Record

Walter Cavanagh, aka "Mr. Plastic Fantastic", holds the world record for having the most credit cards --1497 to be exact--and the longest wallet. It is over 250 feet long and holds 800 cards. It all started with a bet he made with his friend in the 1960's--the one who could get the most credit cards by the end of the year would win a dinner. Cavanagh states he has a "nearly perfect credit score. I only use one card and I pay it off at the end of the month. But you should see the length of my credit report!"

Matchmaking in New York City

Looking for love in all the wrong places? Just check out the back of a NY taxi cab, more specifically, Ahmed Ibrahim's cab. The Egyptian immigrant has been driving cabs for 21 years but just recently found he had the gift of setting up his customers. For those interested, he gets cell phone numbers. When he finds a good match, be it a day or some months later, he sets the two up. "I hope I can accomplish a few marriages," he said. "I'm an old-fashioned guy."

Website Makes Walking Billboard

A New York man has been selling himself to companies across the nation and making quite a profit. Joe Tamargo started a website called LivingAdSpace.com, on which he sells advertisers a spot on his body where they can have their name/logo permanently tattooed. So far he has pharmaceutical companies up and down his arms and 'Save Martha Stewart' across his chest. Tamargo says, "It's definitely better than word of mouth."

3 February 2005

National black history month

Matthew Kunnari Student Forum

February! It's a month of love (Valentine's Day), a month of more cold and snow, a month of dreaming about Spring Break. But could there be more to this month than merely these things? Yes. February is Black History Month. What Black History Month? Why February? Well, don't feel too bad,, because I didn't know either. However, with a quick Google search, I found some interesting insights as to why this month has been set apart.

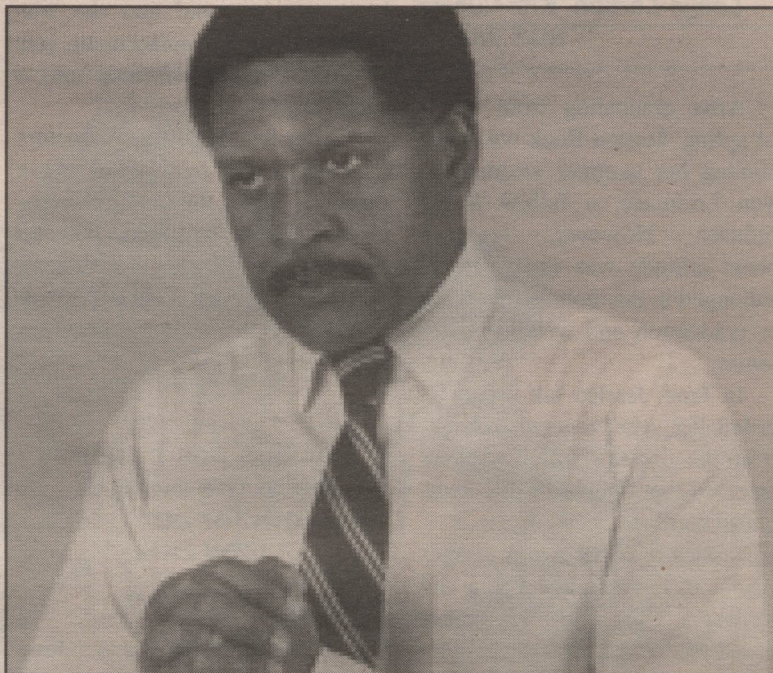
For example, did you know that on February 3, 1870 the 15th Amendment was passed, which expanded the right to vote to include black citizens? The first black U.S. Senator, Hiram R. Revels, was sworn into office on

February 25, 1870. Also, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was established in February of 1909 to end racial discrimination and segregation. The NAACP played a pivotal role in the landmark court case, *Brown vs. Board of Education*, which abolished segregation in schools. Malcolm X, the civil rights leader, was shot and killed on February 21, 1965. African-Americans have played a pivotal role in shaping our country.

Although Dordt College has relatively few African-American students, we should still take time to remember the contributions that they have made to our society. I was shocked this past January when no mention of Martin Luther King Jr. Day (besides the DENIS Planner) was made here at Dordt.

This past week there was a theatrical production remembering King's life, but how many of you took the time to go to it, or paid any attention to the advertisements for it?

Skipping this holiday is a slap in the face to all who strove for racial equality in society. Let's not do the same for Black History month. Yes, there are posters now hanging in the classroom building, but have you read them or will you take the time to do so? I have. I am a member of Student Forum and we would like your opinions on how Dordt should celebrate this important month. If you have any ideas, drop them in our suggestion box in the Campus Center or email me at mtthwknn@dordt.edu. Let's celebrate the contributions that African-Americans have made to our society and not let this month pass us by.



Mixed Blood Theatre Company

Dordt hosted a theatrical solo performance by Warren C. Bowles portraying the life of Dr. Martin Luther King

Voting for Pedro: A *Napoleon Dynamite* Review

Nate Gibson Staff Writer

"Gosh! IDIOT!!!" Two words that have seemingly taken the campus by storm, echoing through a room when somebody blunders, when somebody is exasperated or for no apparent reason at all. In the few short weeks since the semester started, *Napoleon Dynamite* has become the most quoted movie at Dordt.

Bearing all the marks of a cult classic, one can't help but wonder what makes this movie so popular. Dissenters of the movie decry its seeming lack of plot or purpose, the infuriatingly lifeless characters, and above all, its stupid humor. On the opposite side, these are the same features that the fans love about the movie.

The main character is Napoleon (Jon

Heder), an Afro-ed nerd in high school who sketches mythical creatures (very poorly, I might add), plays tetherball alone, and constantly loses his temper at anyone who bothers him.

Joining Napoleon is his older brother, the eternally effeminate Kip (Aaron Ruell). Kip is a scrawny fellow with large glasses and greasy hair who spends all day at home "chatting with babes" on the Internet, and wants to become a cage fighter.

Other characters include Uncle Rico (Jon Gries), an aging ex-high school football star who desperately wishes to go back to his glory days, and makes Napoleon's life miserable in the process; Napoleon's best friend Pedro (Efren Ramirez), a new Hispanic mustachioed kid who is full of one word phrases, and lacking in personality; and Deb (Tina Majorino), a shy girl with a side ponytail

who likes Napoleon.

The movie follows such misadventures as Napoleon and Pedro's quest to get dates for the dance, Uncle Rico's salesman gimmicks, Kip's unfolding relationship with "La Fawn duh", and Pedro's bid for Student Body President. In each of these scenes, the viewer is treated with unforgettable quotes and visual gags.

Perhaps the most memorable scene in the movie occurs after Pedro delivers a less-than-enthusiastic speech in front of the student body. Napoleon walks out onto stage and dances, busting a move remarkably well for an uncoordinated redhead. Or maybe it is the scene where Napoleon attempts to take Pedro's bike off a small makeshift jump, but breaks the jump, taking the bar of the bike hard right between the legs.

Complete with an upbeat yet repetitive

jazz score, *Napoleon Dynamite* is truly a unique viewing experience.

My personal recommendation is to go to the movie not expecting a plot, a purpose, or high comedy. If the viewer sets up expectations of intelligent humor and deep reflection on life, they will be sorely disappointed, but if they anticipate a movie full of random events, slapstick and hilariously stupid quotes, the movie will be thoroughly enjoyed.

Another potential problem is that the movie has been so often quoted, that people who haven't yet seen it will already know all of the funny lines. However, listening to friends quote the movie simply doesn't do it justice, and the lines are much funnier coming from the actual actors.

is *Napoleon Dynamite* a must-see movie? Heck, yes it is.

JJ Reed

Dear JJ Reed,

After receiving numerous requests and giving the idea much consideration we, the Dordt College administration, have decided to consider implimenting coed dorm buildings for the fall 2005/spring 2006 school year. Several female students have expressed the injustice of the North lobby being "like, totally better than East's" and so, in order to keep up with the biblical principals of fairness and equality, any student will be able to choose any room they wish for the coming years. Unfortunately, we haven't quite worked out all the issues surrounding this change. JJ Reed, will you help us?

-Alleged Administration Associates

Dear "Associates,"

Any big change can be tough if not dealt with correctly. After thoroughly researching the topic, I have compiled a few simple suggestions which should make your transition virtually carefree.

1. Designated shower times for each gender. I recommend 2 minutes for the guys, and 1 hour, 58 minutes for the girls. I know the males won't use up all their time, but the extra minute will ensure the showers are cleared for the women.

2. To keep those impure thoughts at bay, have the ladies wear clothing they wouldn't mind seeing their mothers in.

Every room belonging to males should be equipped with an air freshener. Should the room in question house a hockey player, the air freshener number should be increased. Tenfold.

Peer Pressure

Sarah Meyers Opinion Editor

"There's so much pressure to get married!"

"I wish I was old enough to go to that party. It sounds fun."

"People keep telling me not to take that class because it's lame."

My ears have picked up these statements and others similar to them as I have stood in line at the Commons and the Grille. I would like to point out that they are part of an underlying myth at Dordt: peer pressure.

In high school, peer pressure carried the negative connotations of premarital sex, illegal drugs and alcohol. Now we are all hopefully past the high school mentality,

and this is college. So why do we think there's pressure from our peers to do certain things?

One of my favorite bumper sticker sayings is "People would rather be wrong than be different." But at Dordt, a Christian college that by *its* nature goes against the flow (football fans, take note!), there is always room for debate. I said it last year, and I'll say it again: No one is holding a gun to your head and telling you that you have to do anything. Whether it's long-term dating, off-campus parties, or unpopular classes, the decision is yours alone. The great ghost of peer pressure is only as terrifying as you let it be. That is, *if* you believe in it.

Recent Grad Battles Cancer

Leslie Larson, Kim Lucier
Staff Writers

After graduating from Dordt last spring, Jessica Bock was busy planning her summer wedding to Ryan Loomans, a fellow Dordt graduate. However, Jessica's upbeat attitude was unexpectedly challenged in the months following her graduation and wedding ceremonies.

In June, Jessica felt a pain in her left leg. After a general check-up at the doctor's office, doctors suspected that the pain was caused by torn cartilage.

Jessica received two massages because of the increasing pain and swelling. Then, in September Jessica received x-rays at the doctor's office. The doctor sent her to an orthopedic surgeon, who determined that she had a leg tumor.

Soon after, Jessica was formally diagnosed with Ewing's sarcoma, a cancer that attacks soft tissues and bones.

From October to December, Jessica underwent four chemotherapy treatments, roughly three weeks apart, before embarking on her extensive surgery at the University of Minnesota Hospital. The goal of the surgery was to eliminate the cancer from Jessica's body. On January 17, her femur

bone was removed and she was given a titanium replacement. Her knee was transformed into a hinge joint.

After her first surgery, doctors discovered that Jessica had nerve difficulty in her foot, and additional surgery was required. Jessica's femur from the previous surgery, was replaced with a shorter femur to help ease the healing process for her nerves.

"Jessica has honestly been the pillar of strength for our family"
- Libby Bock -

Jessica says that she is getting stronger as the days progress. Libby Bock, a junior at Dordt and Jessica's sister, says, "Jessica has honestly been the pillar of strength for our family. . . . She is optimistic about treatments that she must go through, yet she still knows it is okay to be scared and to cry."

Currently, Jessica is a patient at the University of Minnesota Hospital. When she is released, however, Jessica will stay at the Avera McKennon Hospital for physical occupational rehabilitation.

"Cancer isn't something that

goes away; it isn't a short-term problem," says Jessica. "I've learned to pray a lot and I'm completely dependent on God right now. I'm dependent on the prayers and support of everyone."

Through Jessica's firm belief in God, Libby has experienced God's steadfast love first-hand, in her sister's life.

Jessica's friends and family are very supportive of her situation. This outreach is evident among the fundraisers held for Jessica's treatment. In December, Dordt business professors and students sold nearly 1,000 Casey's Bakery sub sandwiches and chocolate chip cookies to the Dordt community. Through this fundraiser, \$1,500 was earned for the Loomans. Also, a supper was held for the local community in Jessica's hometown, Allen, NE.

Despite his wife's ongoing challenges, Ryan explains that "I couldn't handle half of what Jessica is going through. Ninety-five percent of the time she is in a good mood. Jessica's one tough chick."

Jessica's website, www.caringbridge.com/mn/jessicann, allows friends and family to view her progress and to communicate with Jessica. Anyone is welcome to send a note of encouragement to Jessica, as she greatly appreciates the prayers and support.



caringbridge.org

Jessica Loomans on her wedding day. Since the summer of 2004, Jessica has undergone numerous cancer treatments.

A look at Dordt's diversity

Lindsey DeJong
Features Editor

Last fall semester, the Dordt campus was fortunate to have Alied Boerema, native of Zwolle, the Netherlands, conduct research to examine how the institution welcomes and embraces the international students on campus. Boerema was finishing up the final phase of her degree in Communication and Information Science from the University of Groningen with an internship at Dordt.

Boerema first came to Dordt as a student in 1997. Because of the wonderful experience she had, she approached Sanneke Kok, Coordinator of Academic Services for Minority and International Students, about fulfilling her requirement for an internship here.

After speaking

with Boerema, Ken Bussema "thought [they] could work together and do something useful." Boerema was asked to investigate the question of "how well Dordt is doing at welcoming the international students and preparing Dordt students to go abroad," says Bussema. Being familiar with Dordt, Boerema had a unique perspective and could comment on how Dordt had changed and grown since her time here.

Boerema began working with the Cross-Cultural Advisory Committee, and she also worked closely with the Spectrum club. Further, Boerema interviewed all 26 of the international students as well as missionary kids raised in other countries. The interviews conducted by Boerema centered around questions about how the students found out about Dordt, how well prepared they were before they came to Dordt, and

how well they were received once they arrived on campus.

The answers to these questions were enlightening for the Dordt staff involved with these students. Some students had very little knowledge of the States before they came and were not prepared for simple things like the climate and environment.

"Some were surprised to find cornfields," says Bussema. Other students commented on a desire to know more about professor/student relationships and course expectations. Many were also surprised at the strength of the affiliation with the Christian Reformed Church.

Bussema was excited about the feedback they received from Boerema's report, as the information will help Dordt to better serve the needs of international students in the future. Some areas of the international student's reception and orientation needed to be

addressed by the college.

Each aspect of welcome, from academics and admissions, to social life and language barriers, needed clarification and more cooperation with each other to be effective. He said that it was excellent for Dordt to have an objective and thorough look that "helped make more explicit something that we've felt for a while."

The Spectrum club is also a vital part of encouraging diversity and interaction on campus. Boerema suggested making the club more visible through events and newsletters as well as encouraging more of Dordt's non-international students involved.

Additionally, administration is rethinking orientation and plans on bringing the international students to campus earlier, giving them time to adjust and familiarize themselves with the campus before the rest of the students arrive.

Spectrum members would be on hand to help with this pre-orientation time, as well.

As for sending students abroad, Bussema was pleased with Dordt's success. "Dordt students are well-respected by the Coalition of Christian Colleges and Universities," he says. "We do a better job of getting people ready to go than preparing them to come to Dordt. Part of that is numbers; we simply send more, anywhere from 50-60 abroad per year. As for getting more students to come to Dordt, there are economic and political barriers, such as student's getting visas, that make it more difficult."

Overall, Boerema's report was excellent, winning her top marks from her university. Bussema, as well, thought it excellent and is considering the possibility of providing other similar students with internships at Dordt.

3 February 2005

Tour Egypt with Sara Gerritsma



Sara Gerritsma
Guest Writer

I've heard the question, "So, how was Egypt?" innumerable times these past two months. I spent the fall semester studying in the infamous Middle East. Most of my time was spent in Cairo, Egypt, but I also traveled to Turkey, Syria, and Lebanon.

I learned so much more while I was in Egypt than simply the course material that we studied. I gained more than just a (limited) knowledge of the Arabic language, of Islam, of the people and cultures of the Middle East, and of the Arab-Israeli conflict, although those courses were incredibly interesting. Through interactions with other students on the program and Arabs in the region, I gained insight into faith (my own and the Muslim faith) and politics (American and Middle Eastern),

among other things.

I've learned that empathy and understanding is not necessarily agreement. There were many times when we listened to speakers with whom I disagreed—whether they were Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, priests in the Syrian Orthodox Church, or Americans at U.S. embassies—but with whom I could nevertheless empathize, attempting to understand where they were coming from. I've learned that there are things about the Muslim culture and faith that I can learn from, like their disciplined prayer lives, their attempts to constantly remember God, their incredibly generous hospitality, and their joy in living simple lives. I've learned that in the end, as long as I am following Christ, God really doesn't care about my denominational label. I've learned that God provides in ways that I can never foresee, in situations that I can only imagine, and He often uses those I'd least expect to be His hands and feet when I need His comfort and peace.

But if I had to summarize all of my experiences and insights from the entire semester (which, as you can imagine, is an incredibly difficult task), I'd have to say that I've learned that faith and politics and conflict and life itself are never as black and white as we delude our-



Sara Gerritsma

Sara Gerritsma proving that the Great Pyramid of Giza in Egypt really is not that big.

selves into believing they are. There are so many nuances, so many ambiguities, so many paradoxes that defy human explanation.

For example, I went to Egypt expecting to learn about Islam, eager to be able to compare it with Christianity and show how incorrect it was. Don't get me wrong—I still do believe that faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father—but identifying and refuting every aspect of Islam that I disagreed with simply wasn't as easy as I expected.

It was difficult to nail down specific beliefs in Islam—whether about women, terrorism, Christians, or government—because each Muslim I talked to had a different understanding of the Qu'ran regarding each topic. Yes, there are some things about which all Muslims agree. But it really struck me that Islam is not as uniform as we, especially the American government and media, portray it.

At first this was a source of pride and smugness. "At least Christians know what we believe! What a bad image to portray to non-Muslims—Islam is fractured and as a whole cannot agree on what is Qu'ranic regarding veiling (for example)!"

One of the abunas (Orthodox priests) we talked to snapped me out of that way of thinking real fast. When we asked him to tell us, honestly, what he thought of Western Christianity, he hesitated, then spoke earnestly. "You have lost the

understanding of unity of the church. We don't even know what to teach our children about your faith, because it seems as though each man can make his own denomination! You disagree with another man about something, and you simply split the church. What have we done to the body of Christ?" Ouch.

While criticism is hard to take from someone in a much different position culturally and religiously, I think it is a justified criticism. I thought Muslims couldn't agree about veiling? What about Christians and women in office? Adult or infant baptism? Pre-millennialism, post-millennialism, or amillennialism?

I'm not saying that these issues aren't important, nor that we shouldn't struggle with them and discuss them candidly with other Christians. I'm also not saying that there are no answers to these questions, or even that we shouldn't search for them. What I am saying is that these issues are complicated. We need to approach them with humility. Just when I thought I had it all figured out, and I could put people and ideas into these nice neat little boxes, the walls started to melt and all the distinctions I thought were so clear bled together.

Despite the confusion, the constant surety in all of this also became painfully obvious as the semester flew by. Christ is our cornerstone, our solid ground (as the song goes), our stronghold and refuge. For that very reason we

need not shy away from wrestling with tough issues, whether they are religious, political, or daily struggles. Because He is our one constant, we can face tomorrow, despite all the unknowns. But I often wonder whether Jesus would agree with so many of our "non-negotiables," with the lines that we draw, somewhat arbitrarily at times, to divide ideas, denominations, cultures, and people.

There is an urgent need for Americans to see beyond our own narrow interpretations of the Middle East and to work at understanding and empathizing with the people there. As an economic and political superpower, we have a responsibility to approach them with humility and to see how our actions and words are interpreted in other parts of the world.

This is just one example of the complexities and ambiguities that twenty-three North American college students struggled with last fall in the Middle East. It is a learning process that is far from over for me.

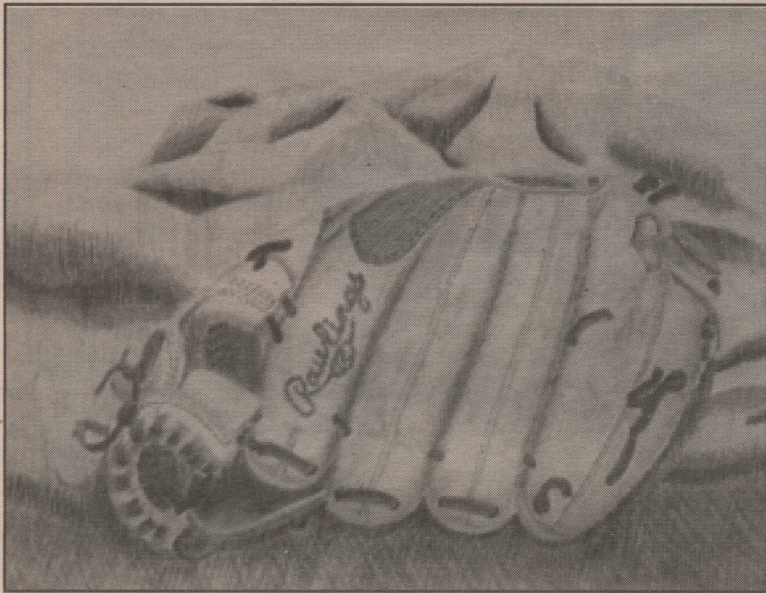
At times I wish I could escape the burden that being open to the "gray" of sinful humanity brings. Black and white are so clear, so easy to categorize—yet so unlike real life. I'm not saying that there is nothing that we know for sure; but being aware of life's complexities certainly makes that one unchanging belief that much more amazing, that much more humbling: "What is your only comfort in life and death?"



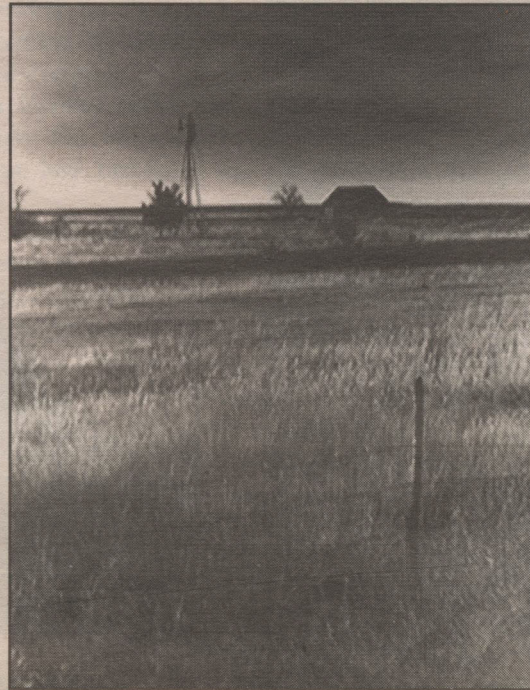
Sara Gerritsma

Sara with her host family, clockwise from left to right: Besthma (9), Sara (11), Nesma (20), and Hella (6).

Junior Art Show



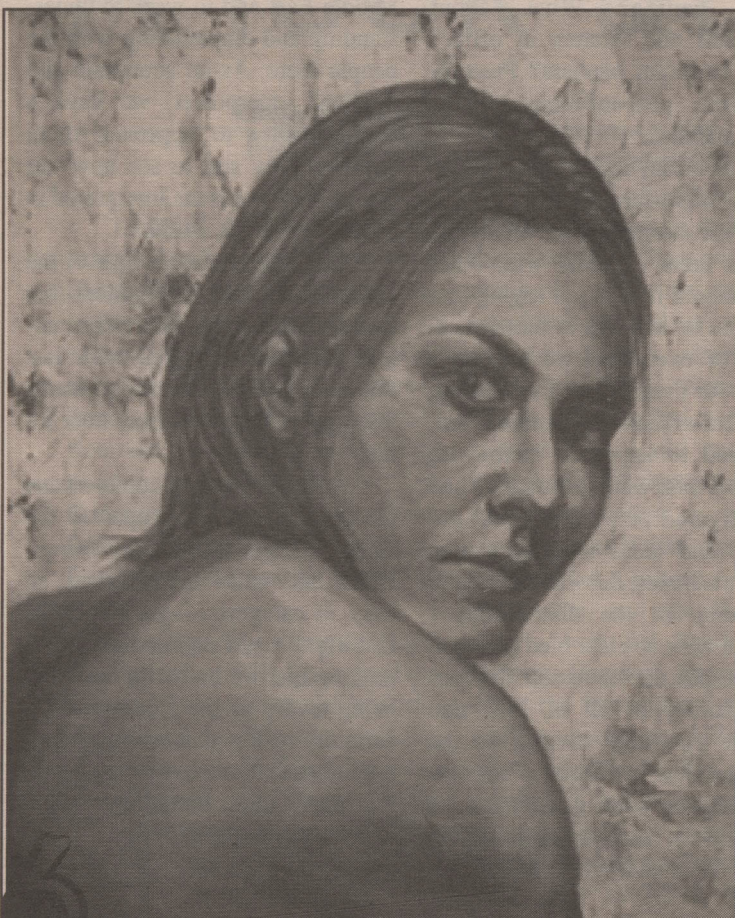
Adam Wilkerson
"Glove"
Graphite
Drawing



Brent Koops
"Menacing
Kansas
Prairie"
Black and
White
Photograph

The show runs from
Monday, February 7
until Sunday,
February 27.
The reception is on
Saturday, February 12
from 5:30-7:00.

Nicole
Vandenberg
"Portrait 1:
The
Experiment"
Mixed Media



Laurel Alons
"Self Portrait"
Acrylic
Painting

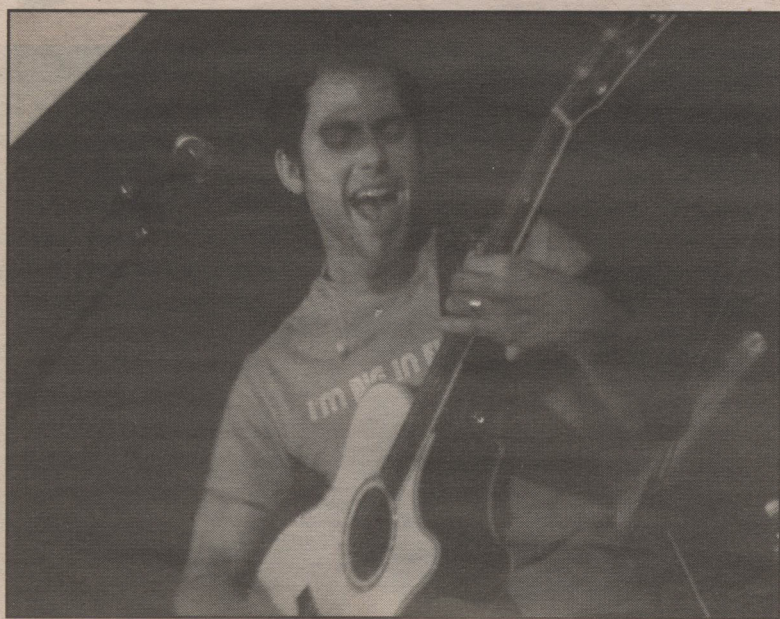


Michelle
Obbink
"Ice-Cold
Fingers"
Black and
White
Photograph

Laurel Alons
Joy De Haan
Jon Dykstra
Sarah Franken
Lois Garrett
Brielle Houston
Brent Koops
Nettie Kossart
Matthew Kunnari
Michelle Obbink
Rebecca Oldenkamp
Catherine Sunderland
Nicole Vandenberg
Tara Warolin
Mark Wikkerink
Adam Wilkerson

3 February 2005

Thinkrock: Going Deeper with Joel G.



Sonya Spaetzel

Joel G entertains fans at a concert last semester. In a personal interview, Joel shared some of his personal experiences and beliefs that have become lyrics to his music.

Lynette Andree Leisure Editor

In an indepth interview with Joel G and his band-Sonya Spaetzel-Manager, Trevor Belec-Bassist/Sound Guy, Paul Terpstra-Electric Guitar/Lighting, Jody Dowdall- Drums/Photography-I had a chance to learn more about the background of the music. Joel has visions and ideas that people need to hear. They are evident in his music, but how many times do people really listen to lyrics? How many times do they really let something challenge them?

How many people only do something because it is expected of them, or think that they are following God's call, but it is really just the easy route? These are some of the questions that Joel G wants to challenge people to think about. God's plan for us may be more diverse than we think. Our lives right now look pretty, but how much of it has God really called us to? And how much of it is because we are comfortable with the way that it is going? How much of what we are doing is because it is the cultural norm? We go to college, get a degree, get a 'real' job that will support you, get married, have

kids, freedom 55, grandchildren, cottage on the lake, retirement. It is our cultural norm--our "happy life."

One of Joel's biggest passions in life is figure skating. He started skating at 12-it was going to be his real career. He has only been singing professionally for about two years now. He felt God's calling to go into the music industry, so he put his trust in God, left his skating career, and got serious about music. He says that he does not do it for the money. They make enough until they can afford to do some pro-bono work.

Joel G and his band participate in music because they feel that it is their calling in life right now. It is something that they all enjoy and can use ultimately for glorifying God. God knows what he is doing. Sonja said, "Some days it is like, 'what the heck are we doing? God, this is ludicrous!'" We may not have money, but money does not guarantee security-it can all disappear in a second-God guarantees security.

One of the challenges that Joel has taken is living in a trailer-a trailer that has no permanent parking place. Joel counts on the body of believers to support him and lend him a place to park his trailer. He needs to have complete trust in God. He said that he depends a lot on the body of Christ. The church needs to be a body of believers who 'watch each other's backs.' As the body of Christ, people are called to be generous and take care of each

other. Christians cannot assume that when there is someone in need, they will find a better way. There are resources out there that need to be shared. Joel said, "You don't know what it is like until you are the believer in need." As long as you believe that you are doing what God has called you to, He will provide, as long as you trust.

Joel made sacrifices to make the album, but it was essentially for God and kingdom work. Joel said, "God will always minister-we get in the way of His ministry." God uses us to minister, but it is also us who get in the way of His ministry. We do what we want and what we think will be most effective-not necessarily what God wants us to do, or is the most effective.

Despite the fact that he has no permanent place to park his trailer, he praises God for being so faithful. He realizes that God has blessed him so much, and he tries to be a good steward with what God has given him. The band has so many stories about how God has provided for them when they were in need-- they were going to buy a van, and it was the right time, a good investment. When they got there, Joel did not feel that it was 'right,' so they didn't. They didn't know how they were going to do their tour, but a band member volunteered his van for the trip-God provided once more.

Everything that Joel believes he puts into his lyrics. They are intense and passionate-a challenge for Christians. He did not write

them to be popular or trendy. His concerts are ultimately to the glory of God. He said, "We don't want it to be a rock show. First and foremost it is an expression of worship." He sings to God-a communication of the gospel. The issues that he sings about are general/universal-sense of identity, purpose, and belonging. He does not sugar coat the issues. They are blatant challenges, real struggles that are faced by Christians every day. They are struggles which many people are embarrassed that they face.

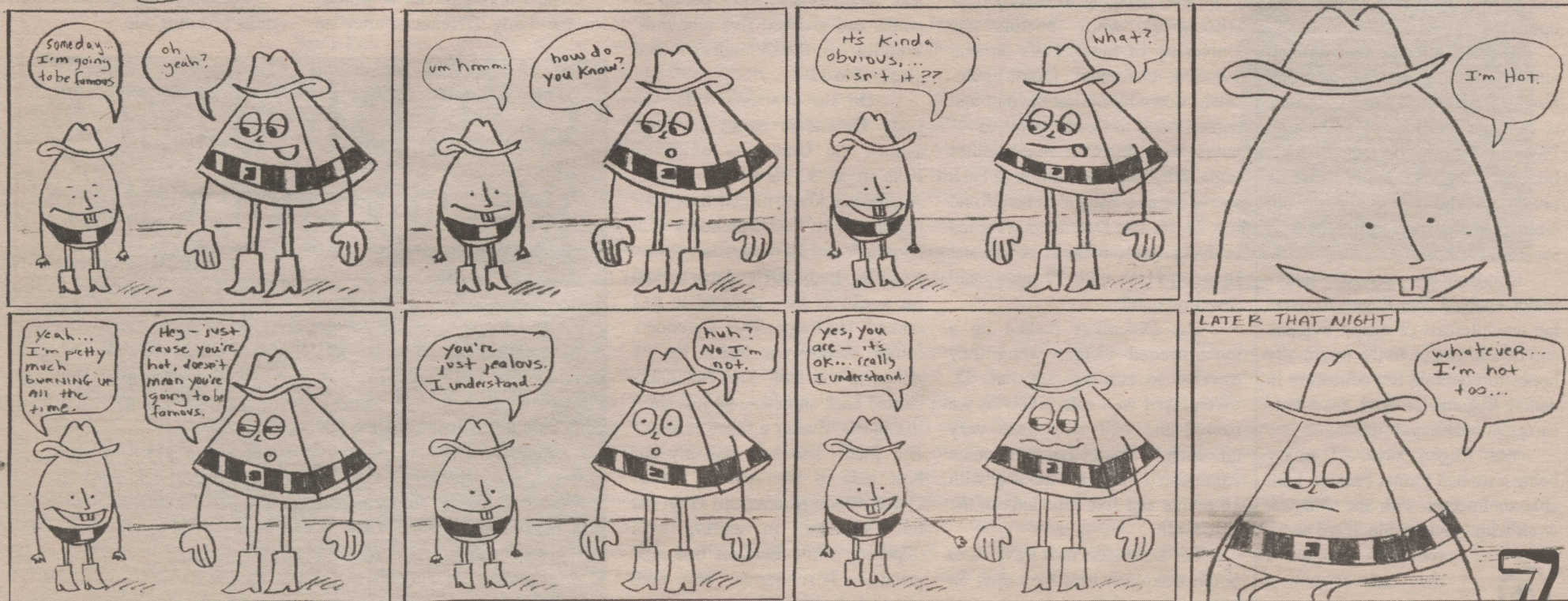
Joel said that the Christian walk is a journey-a journey that deals with a lot of struggle. It is a never-ending story of God wanting to redeem us. When we look at our world, we see that it is broken and full of despair. That despair means that we are meant to have a relationship with God. God is the only thing that makes us different from the despair that the rest of the world wallows in; God is what the rest of the world needs.

Joel said, "[the] Most effective ministry is revealing yourself." People are more receptive to ministry and evangelism when a relationship is developed. To reveal some of yourself, and to have others reveal themselves to you, is the best thing for ministry.

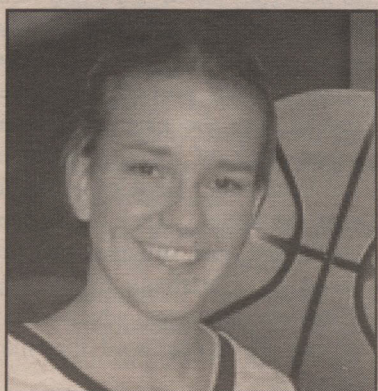
At his concert Joel said, "You have heard my music and hopefully seen some of my heart." I hope this article gave you yet another glimpse at the musician and band behind the music.

Cowboy Cheese

Sam Gutierrez



Behind the Scenes:



Dordt College

Merribeth Van Engen protects fellow athletes.

Leslie Larson
Staff Writer

When Merribeth Van Engen isn't in the gym practicing basketball or working out, she can probably be found taping an ankle.

Van Engen, a student athletic trainer, does a variety of things to prepare athletes for both games and practices. A typical day consists of taping ankles, ultra sounds, wrapping injuries, making sure appropriate supplies are on the training cart, making heel and lace pads, refilling medical kits for away athletic games, a variety of items for home games, and many other extra jobs. On home game days, she also prepares the water coolers, water bottles and towels.

Van Engen isn't the only student athletic trainer; this semester there are six other students who accompany her. Dordt's athletic trainer oversees the student trainer operations.

Athletic director and student athletic training supervisor, Rick Vander Berg says, "This experience is valuable for students going into Physical Therapy or related fields because they can apply what is taught in the classroom. I am amazed at their willingness to serve and learn."

Choosing an exercise science major enabled Van Engen to overlap her interests of dental hygiene and health/fitness. In the future, she hopes to continue her education in dental hygiene or find a suitable career in health and fitness.

Van Engen says, "I enjoy being a student trainer because I am able to interact with the athletes, work with great people, learn about the field and see a new side to athletics."

Indoor track off and running

Jesse Veenstra
Staff Writer

The indoor track season is off and running, and the Dordt track team is looking to have a strong season. With the indoor season almost half over, records have been broken, and the team looks poised to finish the season strong.

The season started off with the University of South Dakota Invite with a few members of the track team participating in various events. In the second meet of the year, the Buena Vista College Invite, members of the Defender track team began to shine.

Dan Gudmunson, a senior from Mount Vernon, Washington, broke the 24-year-old indoor triple-jump record held by Gerrit Brouwer. Gudmunson jumped 43' 3.5" to best the record by more than five inches. The jump was good for third place in the track meet.

Gudmunson hopes to take this early jump and improve on it as the season goes on. "I hope to jump farther for the indoor season, and hopefully I can re-break the outdoor triple jump record that I already hold," he said.

In the same meet at Buena Vista, freshman Jen Kempers qualified for the NAIA National meet in Johnson City, Tennessee, coming up in early March. Kempers leaped to a height of 5' 4.25" to take first in the meet. She also won the mile run at the Buena Vista Invite.

Dordt then hosted the annual Dordt College Indoor Invitational on Jan. 29. The women's 4x800m relay team of Melissa Klein, Tanya Rowenhorst, Abbie Soodsma, and Jen Kempers won the event with a time of 9:41.38 and qualified for Nationals. Also, Dan Van Engen qualified in the 3000m run with a

time 8:46.25, which took first in the event.

The team hopes to build on its quick start, and use this momentum throughout the rest of the season. The strengths of the team have become visible, and they should help the team's performance.

"The women's team strengths

are in the middle distance and high jump. The men's strengths are in distance and middle distance running, high jump, and triple jump," said coach Syne Altena. "Chris Fransman in the high jump and Jared Van Wyk and Kevin Herdegen in the 400 should be strong events this year."



Vanessa Patino

Dan Gudmunson makes an attempt to re-break his triple jump record of 43' 3.5" at the Dordt Indoor Track Invite which was held Jan. 29. Gudmunson took fifth.

Basketball teams keep on rolling

Rachel Guthmiller
Sports Editor

The men's and women's basketball teams continue to roll as they enter the last part of the regular season.

Coming off a win over Midland Lutheran, the Defender Men were looking to extend their win streak while hosting the University of Sioux Falls on Jan. 19. The Defenders found themselves down by four at the half and battled back to tie the game at 41 points with just over five minutes remaining, but could not hold back the late-game Cougars charge and lost 72-76. The Defenders were led by Luke Ruter with 22 points and Brandon Haan with 19 points and seven rebounds.

The Defenders picked up a much-needed victory when they traveled to Hastings on Jan. 22. "We played well offensively as we passed the ball and were very unselfish," Coach Greg Van Soelen commented. Haan led the way with 16 points and five rebounds in the 81-61 win.

The Defenders next traveled to South Dakota, where they took on Mount Marty College. In a physical conference game, the Defenders

committed 20 turnovers in route to a 51-61 loss. Ruter put up 16 points and four rebounds while Haan netted 15 points and grabbed six rebounds.

The losing streak continued for the Defenders, as they could not hang on to an 18-point half-time lead versus Doane. Ruter put up 20 points and grabbed five rebounds. With the loss the Defender's record dropped to 13-7.

On the women's side, the Lady Defenders came up short against the University of Sioux Falls in an 82-96 loss. Freshman Amanda Eekhoff turned in a double-double to lead Defenders with 23 points and 19 rebounds.

The Lady Defenders looked for a win as they traveled to #12 ranked Hastings. The Defenders found themselves down by 22 points at the half. The Defenders battled back and came up just short losing 81-78 after a failed last-second shot. "This was possibly our best half of the season," noted Coach Glenn Bouma. Jill Haan led the Defenders in scoring with 22 points, while Eekhoff had nine points, 14 rebounds, and nine blocked shots.

The Defenders next took on

Mount Marty. After falling behind 11-7 the Defenders went on an 11-0 run and didn't look back as they picked up the 78-68 victory. Shawna Flikkema had 16 points and Rachel Van Beek turned in a double-double with 11 points and 11 rebounds.

The winning streak continued for the Lady Defenders after an

upset of the #8 ranked Doane in an 83-80 victory. A pair of free throws by Flikkema iced the game for the Defenders. Flikkema netted 19 points while Haan had 13 points and ten 10 rebounds. With the victory the Defenders pushed their record to 8-12.

The next home game is Feb. 12 versus Morningside.

QUICK HITS: Healthy competition

Rachel Guthmiller
Sports Editor

Many people think that competition is a bad thing. And it's true; competition can bring the worst out of people (like fans throwing frozen jackrabbits on the basketball court during South Dakota State University-the Jackrabbits-basketball games). However, I would like to propose that competition can also bring the best out of people.

Competition is good. It motivates and encourages hard work. It not only helps get the best performance out of you, but also your opponent. In whatever you are competing in, whether it's intramurals, a play audition or a fundraiser, a sense of cooperation is needed to help each other be the best you can be. You may not think of it this way, but doing your best is helping your opponent do their best. In other words, competition is an act of service. Competition is good, as long as it's kept in perspective.